

“ the Lightning was more terrible to our Eyes than
 “ the Sound of the Thunder to our Ears....Like to
 “ this is the Case of *Whirl-puffs.*”

Tours, &c.

J. R.

XIX. An Account of an extraordinary Fire-ball bursting at Sea, communicated by Mr. Chalmers.

Read March 22. 1749. **NO**vember 4. 1749. in the Latitude of $42^{\circ} 48'$ Longitude, $09^{\circ} 03'$ the Lizard then bore, N. $41^{\circ} 05'$ about the Distance of 569 Miles. I was taking an Observation on the Quarter-deck, about ten Minutes before 12 o'Clock: One of the Quarter-masters desired I would look to Windward, which I did, and observed a large Ball of blue Fire rolling on the Surface of the Water, at about Three Miles Distance from us: We immediately lowered our Topsails, and had our Fore and Main Clew-Garnets manned to haul up our Courses; but it came down upon us so fast, that before we could raise the Main Tack, we observed the Ball to rise almost perpendicular, and not above forty or fifty Yards from the Main Chains: It went off with an Explosion as if Hundreds of Cannon had been fired at one time; and left so great a Smell of Brimstone, that the Ship seemed to be nothing but Sulphur. After the Noise was over, which I believe did

did not last longer than half a Second ; we looked over head, and found our Maintopmast shattered into above an hundred Pieces, and the Mainmast rent quite down to the Heel. There were some of the Spikes, that nail the Fish of the Mainmast, drawn with such Force out of the Mast, that they stuck in the Main Deck so fast, that the Carpenter was obliged to take an Iron Crow to get them out : There were five Men knocked down, and one of them greatly burnt, by the Explosion. We believe, that when the Ball, which appeared to us to be of the Bigness of a large Millstone, rose, it took the Middle of the Main Topmast, as the Head of the Mast above the Hounds was not splintered : We had a very hard Gale of Wind, from the N. by W. to the N. N. E. for two Days before the Accident, with a great deal of Rain and Hail, and a large Sea : From the Northward we had no Thunder nor Lightning, before nor after the Explosion. The Ball came down from the N. E. and went to the S. W.

This Account was given by Mr. *Chalmers*, who was, when the above-mentioned Accident happened, on board his Majesty's Ship the *Montague*, under the Command of Admiral *Chambers*.